

Fact Sheet

News from the IBD Help Center

IBD AND KEEPING UP WITH IMMUNIZATION

Immunization is an important tool for prevention of disease in healthy people. It is even more important for those taking immunosuppressants for their inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD). For IBD patients, there are some important things to consider before getting vaccinated.

IBD patients should, in most cases, follow the recommended immunization schedule for children and adults. For example, a yearly influenza vaccine is strongly recommended. Additionally, those taking immunosuppressants or those that may need immunosuppressants in the future may require additional vaccines.

It is important to know that some vaccines are live vaccines (which contain weakened form of virus or bacteria) active virus vaccines). Live vaccines may not be safe when taking immunosuppressant medications such as steroids, tofacitinib, upadacitinib, oxanimod, immunomodulators (like azathioprine, 6MP or methotrexate), or biologic therapies (such as adalimumab, certolizumab pegol, guselkumab, infliximab, mirikizumab-mrkz, risankizumab-rzaa, ustekinumab or vedolizumab). ¹Your doctor may recommend inactivated forms of these vaccines, if available. Before taking any vaccine, you should discuss the risks, benefits, and safety of the vaccine with your gastroenterologist.

Some common live vaccines include:

- Rotavirus (RotaTeq®)
- Intranasal influenza vaccine (FluMist®)*
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (Varicella, Viravax®)
- Shingles (Zostavax®)*
- Smallpox
- Yellow fever
- Oral Polio

Visit the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention's (CDC) US Vaccine Table for a complete list of vaccines, as well as general immunization schedules for children and adults.

*Inactivated (non-live) versions of these vaccinations are available.

References:

1. Farraye, F; Melmed G; Lichtenstein, G; Kane S. ACG Clinical Guideline: Preventive Care in Inflammatory Bowel Disease. American Journal of Gastroenterology. Volume 112(2), February 2017, p 241-258

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